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JERUSALEM

Beyond all cities Jerusalem controls human sentiment. Other cities may be great and beautiful and sacred. But they are not Jerusalem—which is neither great nor beautiful. For centuries it has stood outside the course of history. Democracy and commerce, invention and literature, wealth and art, have passed it by. Circled by its mountains it has cherished its one monopoly: Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan have called it Holy.



Imponderabilia determine the making of wars, Bismarck declared. Jerusalem is one of the mighty *imponderabilia* of history. It has no commercial, military, or political power. To see it is to be disillusioned. Sentiment retreats before geography and imagination pales before archaeology.

But Jerusalem persists as a symbol. It stands for religion. To possess it is to proclaim the might of a religion. To lose it is to confess a defeat for a religion. That helps explain the passion of the Crusaders, the pride of the Turk, the lament of the Jew.

What its future may be no one can tell. But this is certain: Jerusalem has always fallen in the direction history, both religious and political, has been moving. From the days of David it has been conquered by the great conquerors. Assyrian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Macedonian, Syrian, Roman, Arabian, Crusader, Turk, have sealed their triumphs with its walls. Today it is in Christian hands. The omen is auspicious!



Because of this sanctity born of memory rather than of present significance, Jerusalem has always been the plaything of religious extremists. You can find more sorts of religious fanatics in

Jerusalem than in any city in the world. Most of them are waiting and preparing for the coming of the Messiah and the Judgment Day. Such folk have been there for centuries. They will probably continue to come as long as Christians make a theory of inspiration the basis of their religion.

But Jerusalem itself is a standing evidence that God's judgments do not wait on the vagaries of Jewish apocalypses and elaborate charts detailing ingenious interpretations of prophecy. Its streets and walls and sacred places are eloquent of a God whose will is to be read in current events and whose kingdom grows or wanes according to the loyalty of men to his Spirit and his truth.

We shall have many pronouncements as to the end of the world, now that Jerusalem has fallen. Indeed we already have them—strange utterances for men of sanity. Many will be saying, Lo here! and Lo there! But they, like their predecessors in such foretellings, will be mistaken. The Christ is already here working in men's hearts. History is not a failure. Pessimism is not a sign of faith. Jerusalem in its falls has had historical rather than miraculous meaning.

To those whose eyes are not so blinded that they cannot see God's working in human affairs, the fall of Jerusalem is an indication that history is not headed toward brute force or superstition. The mills of history grind slowly, but they grind according to the will of Him who would save rather than condemn the world.

The surrender of Jerusalem, symbol of religion, to the representatives of democracy rather than of militarism is one more evidence that the agony of the present moment foretells, not the death, but the new birth, of civilization.